

Shared Cultural Heritage 2017-2020

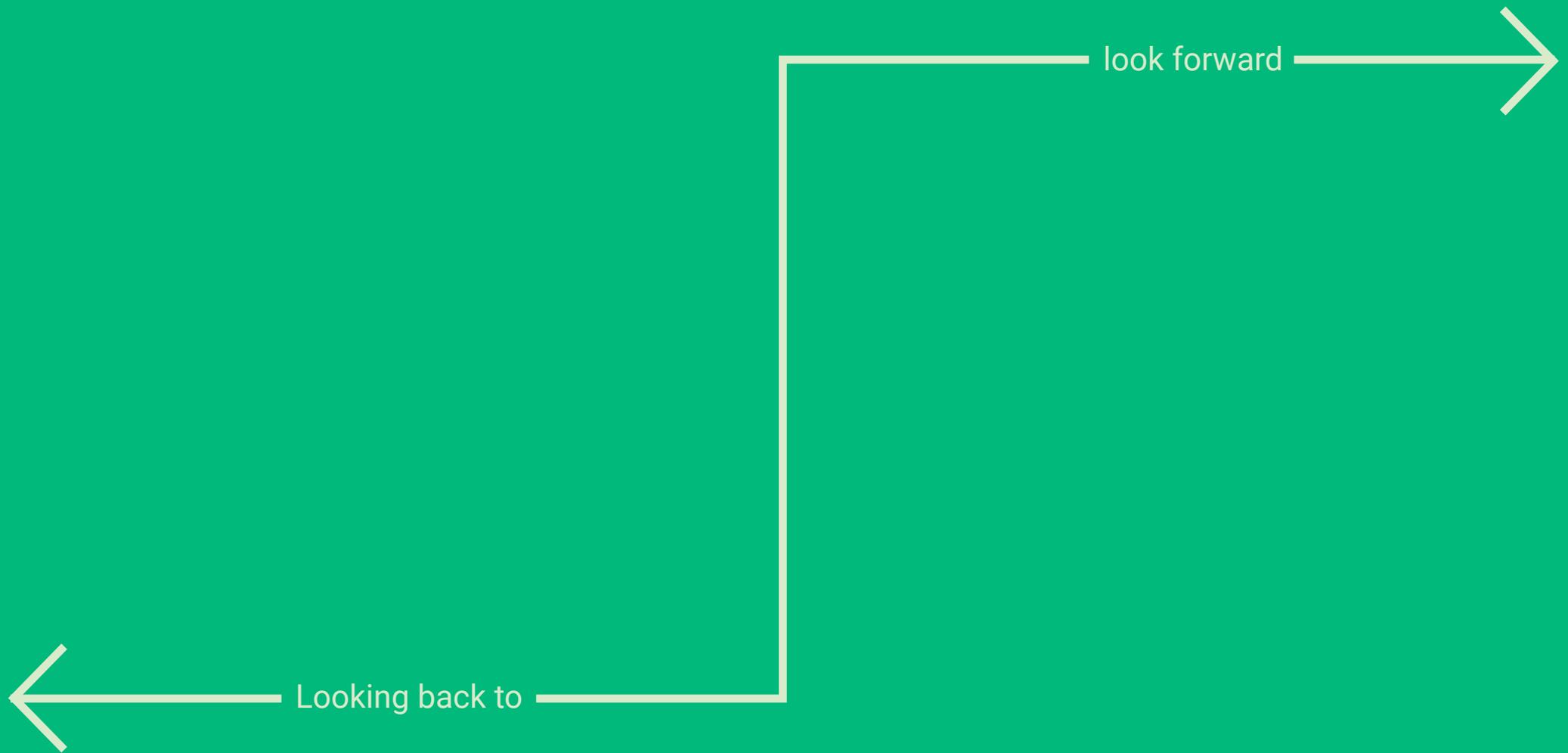


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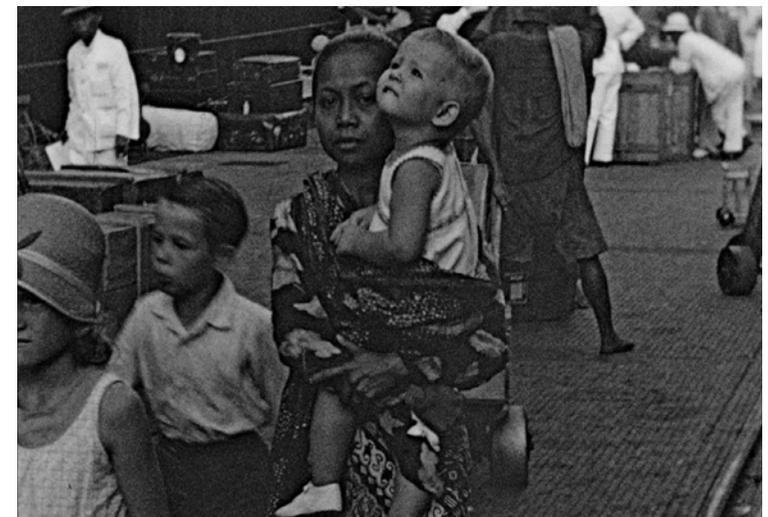
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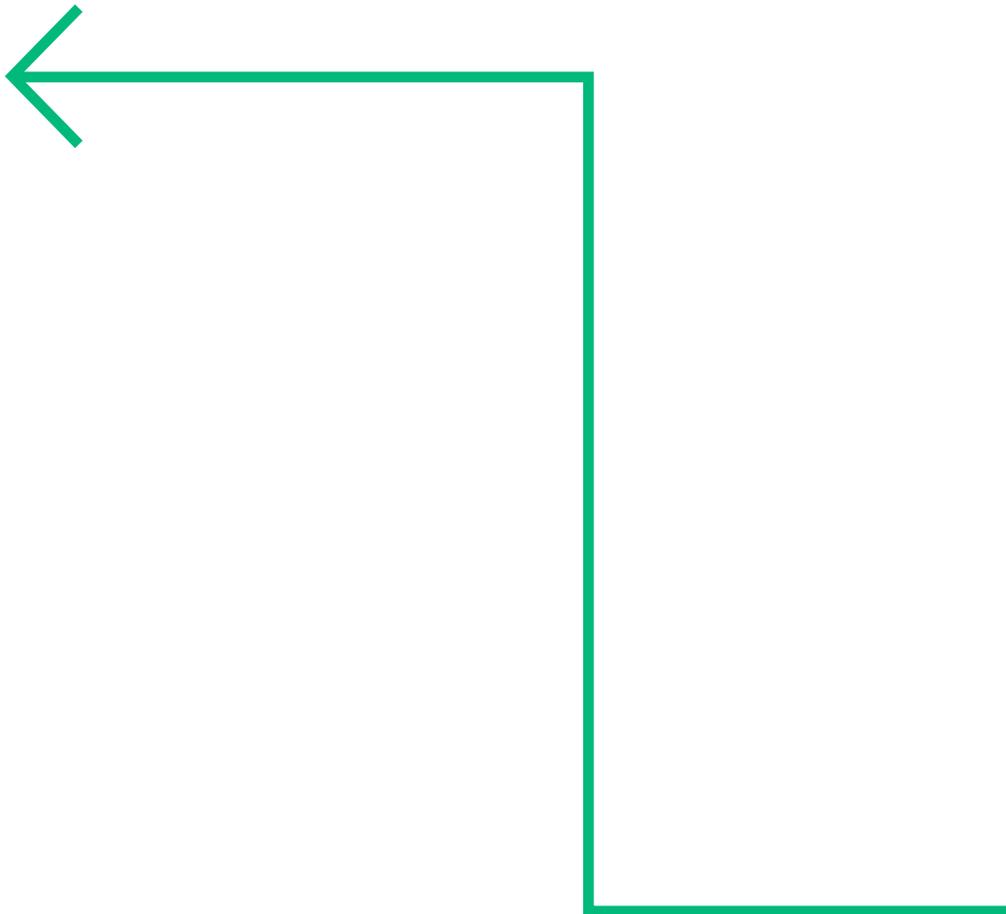
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A still from the documentary *They Call Me Babu* by Sandra Beerends, showing a 'babu' at the docks. 'Babu' was the word used by Dutch families to refer to their Indonesian nannies during Dutch colonial rule. This documentary was supported by the Shared Cultural Heritage Matching Fund of DutchCulture.

Photo:
Pieter van Huystee Film

Looking back



Shared Cultural Heritage was one of the priorities of the Netherlands' International Cultural Policy, which is a responsibility of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The two ministries used the International Cultural Policy Framework 2017–2020 to provide guidance to efforts in the field of shared cultural heritage. The main objectives of this policy were:

- A strong cultural sector, where international exchange and sustainable cooperation ensure increasingly higher quality, and which is recognised and valued abroad.
- More room for the arts to contribute to a safe, just, future-proof world.
- To use culture effectively as a tool of modern diplomacy.

Our language, our culinary traditions, the buildings that surround us, archives we have collected and the stories we pass on bear many traces of histories that connect the Netherlands with other countries, among them Australia, Brazil, India, Indonesia, Japan, Russia, South Africa, Sri Lanka, Suriname and the United States. The following organisations worked on and supported international and Dutch partners towards the preservation, management, accessibility and visibility of cultural heritage related to shared histories between the Netherlands and these ten countries.

Partners

Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands

The [Cultural Heritage Agency](#) is the Netherlands' centre of expertise for heritage. It is an executive body of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science. Heritage care is a public interest, for which the Dutch government also takes responsibility. The tasks of the Agency go beyond merely preserving and protecting historical buildings, sites and works of art. Today, society devotes increasing attention to how cultural historical values can be given a place within spatial development plans and projects. Doing so ensures giving future a – recognisable – past. Together with its partners, it works on a sustainable future for heritage within the domains of historic buildings, museums, archaeology and the landscape. Within Shared Cultural Heritage, in the last four years, the Cultural Heritage Agency supported local experts in partner countries by promoting the exchange of knowledge and capacity building. The instruments that the Agency uses are trainings, advice and knowledge products such as handbooks and inventories. Based on the needs and wants of local experts in partner countries and the available expertise, the Cultural Heritage Agency focused on three themes within the Shared Cultural Heritage programme: Maritime Archaeology, Collections and Built Environment.

DutchCulture, Centre for International Cultural Cooperation

[DutchCulture](#) is the network and knowledge organisation for international cultural cooperation. This centre supports the Dutch cultural and creative sector, public authorities and diplomatic posts in the pursuit of their international ambitions. DutchCulture's mission regarding shared cultural heritage was to boost international cooperation focused on tangible and intangible shared heritage, by supporting (mainly, but not exclusively) Dutch heritage professionals. This was done by offering advice for international cooperation, sharing information, organising network events, organising Visitor Programmes to the Netherlands, supporting knowledge exchange between the Netherlands and the focus countries, and by financially supporting international heritage projects.

National Archives of the Netherlands

The National Archives of the Netherlands is situated in the Hague and holds over 3.5 million records created by the Dutch central government, organisations and individuals that have been of national significance. The collection includes archives and maps concerning former Dutch colonies and overseas trading posts in North and South America, Africa, Asia and Oceania dating from 1600 to 1975. The National Archives works with (other) archival institutions, heritage organisations and a global network of researchers and communities to exchange knowledge and create awareness of shared histories. By digitisation and online publication of relevant archives from the Netherlands and the partner countries, the National Archives aims to improve and enlarge the accessibility and the use of these collections. Improved access to these archival sources stimulates international and interdisciplinary (historical) research. The National Archives also advises and supports archivists and heritage professionals in the field of restoration/conservation and digitisation of archives, as well as (digital) records management.

Dutch embassies in the partner countries

The diplomatic missions of the Netherlands in the focus countries play a key role in connecting local cultural heritage professionals and organisations with relevant counterparts in the Netherlands. The cultural officials working at the embassies aim to foster and support the exchange of knowledge and cooperation. Additionally, thanks to their specific knowledge of national, regional and local contexts, they support professionals and organisations based in the Netherlands to improve their understanding of local circumstances and adapt their ambitions and projects accordingly. Furthermore, the diplomatic missions play their part in the identification of economic and cultural opportunities for both local and Dutch heritage organisations. Last but not least, they provide financial means to support projects that focus on international cultural heritage cooperation.

In this publication, we look back at the past four years of Shared Cultural Heritage cooperation. Through infographics we give an impression of the diversity and scope of our work and the many projects and activities that took place from 2017–2020. Four articles share concrete examples of our projects, while highlighting good practices, lessons learnt and collaboration amongst the programme's partners and many organisations and institutions around the world. Each of the articles addresses at least one if not more of the main goals of the programme: the sustainable preservation, management, accessibility and visibility of cultural heritage that connects the Netherlands with several countries around the world.

The first article focuses on Hirado in Japan. It sheds light on the process of working together towards the revitalisation of urban environments by making use of (shared) heritage assets, a challenge that is common to many contexts around the world. The second looks at one of the many projects supported by DutchCulture's Matching Fund in the past four years, called Mindful Circulations. This project is a powerful illustration of the potential of international collaboration and creative practices for dealing with violent pasts, in this case the colonial histories that connect the Netherlands with India and Indonesia. The third article is about the accessibility of archival collections through digitisation. Many collections based in the Netherlands refer to the histories of different countries, and therefore cooperation is essential to make them accessible to everyone interested. The fourth article sheds light on two different projects supported by the Dutch Embassy in Moscow and the Netherlands Consulate- General in St. Petersburg. One represents an artistic and textile take on shared Russian-Dutch histories, an example that showcases, much like Mindful Circulations, the potentials of multidisciplinary for engendering different perspectives about the past. The second highlights the importance of knowledge exchange for the development of new approaches to using built heritage for shifting societal needs.

In the final part of this publication, we shift our gaze forward to share information about how our work will continue in the new policy period 2021–2024. The next four years are characterised by many continuities as well as important changes.



The now empty coal silos in Sawahlunto, Indonesia, are currently used as a climbing wall by the local alpinist association. This site represents an interesting example of adaptive reuse. The Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands has been supporting the local authorities in finding a new future perspective for the former mining town, recently listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site.

Photo: Jean-Paul Corten

We created this publication to be informative and inspirational for those interested or involved in cultural heritage that connects the Netherlands with other countries. We hope it will encourage individuals and organisations to continue or start working together on cultural heritage in innovative, sustainable and inclusive ways.

The projects and activities highlighted in this publication, and many others that took place in the past four years, would not have been possible without the cooperation and support of our partners, colleagues and friends in the Netherlands and around the world. We are grateful for their support. We are very proud of what we have achieved together in the past few years, and we look forward to continuing our work in the next four years!



The Museum of the City of New York organised two [Professional Learning Development Trainings](#) for pre-K12 teachers on Dutch New Amsterdam: the training *Native New York: American Indians and Dutch New Amsterdam* hosted in partnership with the National Museum of the American Indian New York and the course *Dutch New Amsterdam: Legacy of a Colony*. The Dutch Culture USA Programme of the Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands supported the participation of 116 educators.

Photo: Sophie van Doornmalen

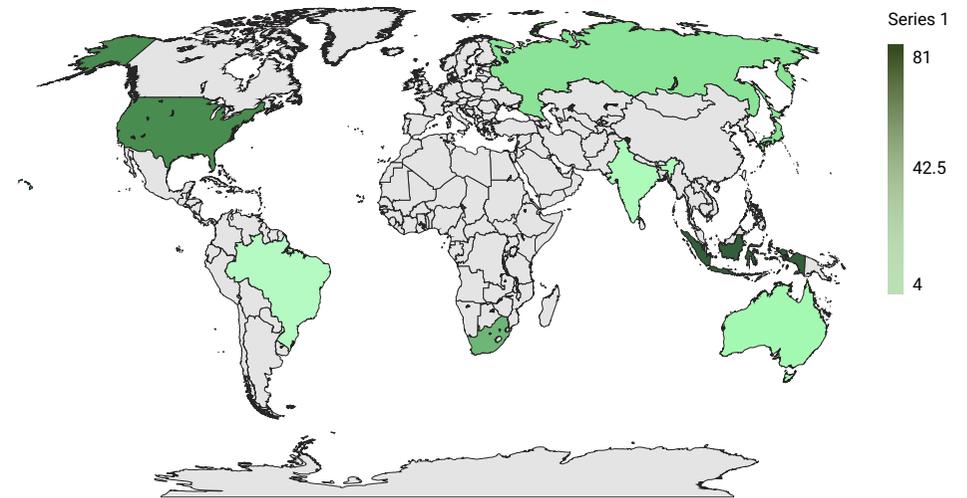
Shared Cultural Heritage 2017-2020 in numbers

Between 2017 and 2020, approximately 520 shared cultural heritage activities took place that were organised and/or supported by one or more of the programme partners. The number of activities and projects varied throughout the four years of the policy period, with 2020 marking a significant decrease. This should be seen in light of the COVID-19 pandemic and the travel restrictions that led many activities to be cancelled or postponed, and others to be transferred to online environments.

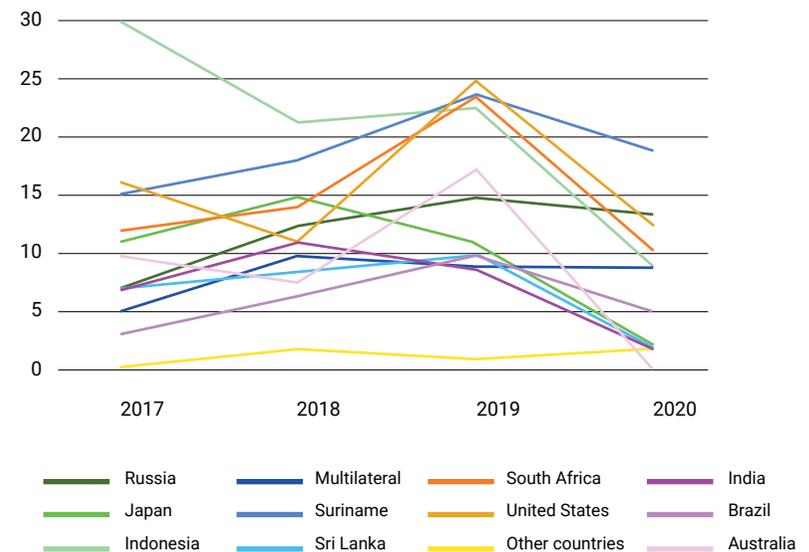
A significant amount of the activities took place in Indonesia and Suriname. To a great extent, this is related to the strong historical and contemporary ties between the Netherlands and these two countries. Both countries were colonies of the Netherlands until and during the twentieth century, Suriname becoming independent as late as 1975. Migration between these countries and the Netherlands – and especially from Suriname to the Netherlands in the 1970s and 1980s – also help explain these ties that are still strongly felt today.

Projects and activities spanned various disciplines or fields within cultural heritage, such as built environment, archives, collections and intangible heritage. These included research projects and trainings, exhibitions and publications, conferences and presentations, and many others that relate also to other fields of work, such as the arts (such as performances) and technology (such as the creation of mobile applications). These infographics give a sense of the diversity and quite often the multidisciplinary of the activities and projects organised and/or supported by the programme partners.

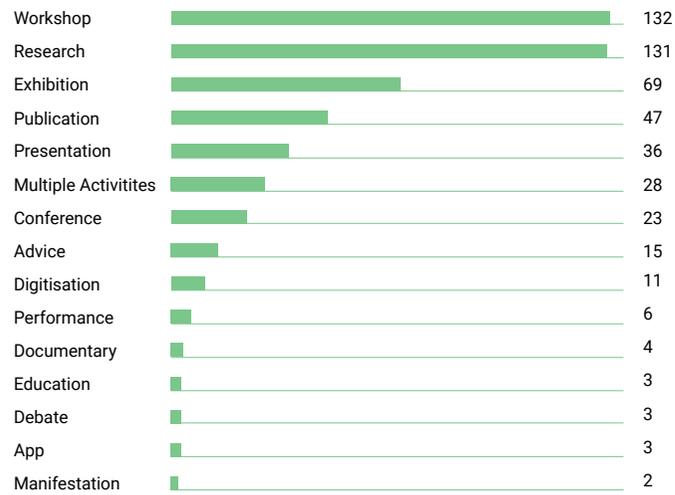
Project per country



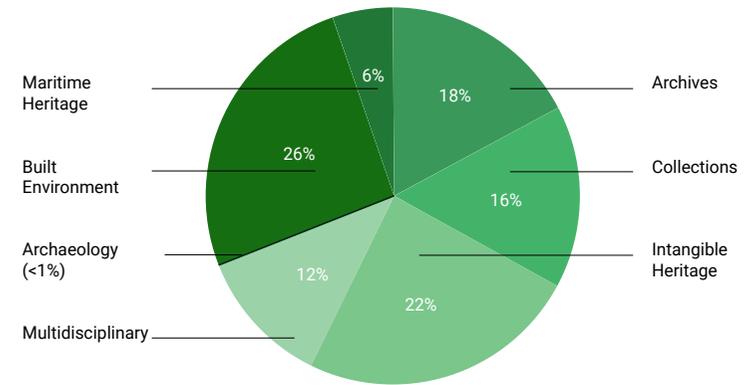
Project over time



Activity type



Subdisciplines



Projects per country overview

Country	2017	2018	2019	2020	Total
Russia	7	13	15	13	48
Multilateral	5	10	9	8	32
South Africa	12	14	24	10	60
India	7	11	9	1	28
Japan	11	15	11	2	39
Suriname	15	18	24	14	71
United States	16	11	25	13	65
Brazil	3	6	10	5	24
Indonesia	30	21	22	8	81
Sri Lanka	7	8	10	2	27
Other countries	0	2	1	1	4
Australia	10	7	17	0	34
Total	123	136	177	77	513

Happy healthy Hirado: Working together on the revitalisation of a historical city centre



Marthijn Pool (Space & Matter) and the participants of the 2017 workshop in Hirado

Photo:
Jean-Paul Corten, 2017

In 2017, the Hirado Conservation and Development Workshop was held, initiated by the Japan-Netherlands Architecture and Cultural Association (JNACA), in cooperation with the Municipality of Hirado (Cultural Division and Planning Division) and the Hirado Kurumaza Group. Students from several Japanese universities participated in this workshop, aimed at defining the development potentials of Hirado's historical features. How can the historical urban features contribute to the city's current needs? And vice-versa, what new impulses can provide a base of existence and future perspectives to the historical features at stake?

The workshop was led by the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE), in cooperation with architectural firm Space & Matter and the Netherlands Embassy in Japan, and it was carried out within the context of the Shared Cultural Heritage programme. Liveable historical cities is one of the main themes within this programme, and the historical connections between both countries span several centuries.

The first Dutch trading post in Japan

Being a port city, Hirado has a long history of international connections. Its relationship with the Netherlands started in 1609, when the Tokugawa shogunate allowed the Dutch East India Company (VOC) to trade with Japan, after which they set up a trading post in Hirado under the guidance of Matsura Takanobu, lord of Hirado. This venture was short-lived since in 1640, by order of Shogun Tokugawa Iemitsu, Governor-General Inoue Masashige instructed all Dutch buildings to be destroyed. This change in sentiment towards the Dutch, which was growing for some time, was triggered by the display of the year 1639 on the gable of the storage house built by the VOC. As it followed the Christian calendar, it was in violation of the Japanese anti-Christian policy. The Dutch trading post was therefore ordered to relocate to Dejima island in the port of Nagasaki, and this building was ordered to be destroyed.

This chain of events, however, did not mark the end of the collaboration between Hirado and the Netherlands. In 1922, the Hirado Dutch Trading Post was recognised as a national heritage site, indicating that the connections between Hirado and the Netherlands lived on in Japan's collective memory. In 2003, excavations on the site of the 1639 stone storage house were completed, and in 2008, the city of Hirado started a reconstruction project of this building. This project was based on extensive research by a team of Japanese experts supported by Dutch architects and advice from the RCE. The reconstructed building opened to the public in 2011 and the Dutch Embassy in Tokyo supported the events organised for this occasion. Although the building plans of the original structure are not exact, based on excavations, archival research and the study of similar warehouses in other parts of Asia, the experts created a reconstruction that seems very close to the original. The Dutch Trading Post, as the building has been called, exhibits the structure's original Dutch architecture of interlocking stone blocks supported by large, exposed wooden beams. The structure is capped by a Japanese-style tile roof, much like the original.

While the reconstruction of the stone warehouse in Hirado brought experts from Japan and the Netherlands together, it also stimulated connections with other countries. At the initiative of the Director of the reconstructed Dutch Trading Post in Hirado, Mr. Yoshiharu Okayama, representatives of Asian cities with heritage related to the VOC were brought together, such as Ambon, Galle, Jakarta and Tainan. This led to the creation of the [Dutch Trading Post Heritage Network](#) in 2014. The aim of this network is to share knowledge and to cooperate on future historical research initiatives, and it functions as a platform to increase cultural, educational and economic exchange. The creation of the network was also made possible through the financial support of the Dutch Embassy in Tokyo, which helped organise the first meeting in January 2014. The Netherlands works together with several members of the network on the topics of historical archives, city renewal, museum development, and water and heritage.



The reconstructed VOC storage house

Photo: R. Vrolijk, 2011

Revitalising a shrinking city

The reconstruction of the warehouse was inspired by the ideas of experts, yet it was not sufficiently informed by the needs of the city and its inhabitants. During the construction process, time pressure led to a lack of consideration for the social function of this building. This work therefore resulted in a beautiful building lacking a clear social purpose and engagement. At the same time, Hirado is in need of new impulses. An aging population and younger generations that are increasingly moving out of the city are causing it to become a less attractive living and working environment. The result is vacancy and decay, leading even more residents to exchange Hirado for larger cities.

The Hirado Conservation and Development Workshop was thus held to investigate how this historical city could once more become attractive for living, working and leisure. The participants included 12 students from several Japanese universities. The main development opportunities for Hirado lie in its natural assets and historical features, while the main drawbacks for development are its remote location and a cityscape that could be easily disrupted by uncontrolled development and expanding parking lots. With this in mind, the students identified three areas that could strengthen the city's vitality and livelihood: the cluttered waterfront, the main shopping street, and the castle hill. For each of these areas, they proposed specific redesign strategies.

Every motorist, bus or boat passenger and sporadic cyclist arrives at Hirado's waterfront. As a transport hub, it has the potential to develop into a transfer point, which could serve the convenience of residents and visitors to the city. To make the bay accessible and liveable and to connect it with the city, the students proposed a promenade that also provides better access to the VOC warehouse.

Hirado's oldest infrastructure is the central shopping street, with its characteristic wooden houses. The street represents the cultural backbone of the city and a place where locals meet. However, many buildings are now vacant, and the role of the main street is under pressure. According to the students, these buildings are ideal for shared use. For example, a bookshop and a café could share the ground floor of a building that

now only houses a yoga studio. Different enterprises and businesses could share customers and costs with each other, thus improving the facilities in the city, and contributing to its vitality.

Like the waterfront, the castle hill is another characteristic element of Hirado, and it offers opportunities as a recreational area. The rebuilt castle, dated to 1599, towers over the city. Recent experiments to use the castle to attract visitors to Hirado seem promising. This also makes the redevelopment of the hill as a recreational park feasible, which would also benefit the residents of Hirado.

While the students' proposals present possibilities for Hirado, it is up to the local community to apply them if deemed appropriate. The municipality is currently working on developing a vision for the future of Hirado. An important condition for the successful revitalisation of the city seems to be further coordination with the metropolis of Fukuoka. The tranquillity of Hirado offers the opportunity to escape the fast pace of Fukuoka, while Fukuoka offers other advantages of a larger city.

The bay of Hirado seen from the temple complex

Photo: Jean-Paul Corten



Follow-up

In 2018, a summary of the results of the workshop was presented to the planning authority of Hirado. It provides development potentials for Hirado's historical features and an insight into the way these can contribute to the city's current needs. Furthermore, it shows how these new developments can support Hirado's historical features. In March 2020, the JNACA held a work-shop with the municipality of Hirado to identify the public needs of the city. The workshop was supported by the Netherlands Embassy in Tokyo. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the RCE could only participate online. This workshop represents the first step towards finding common ground amongst the stakeholders involved. Once the COVID-19 situation allows, the RCE will join the JNACA for the following step, which will involve identifying the needs of the private sector and those of the civic parties. Having identified common ground amongst the stakeholders, it will become possible for the municipality to formulate a future vision for Hirado.



The main shopping street of Hirado

Photo: J.P. Corten, 2017

This article was written by Jean-Paul Corten (Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands), and supplemented by Bas Valckx (Dutch Embassy in Tokyo).

Further information

[Happy Healthy Hirado](#) (in English)
by J.P. Corten and G. Kozijn

[Happy Healthy Hirado](#) (in Japanese)
by J.P. Corten and G. Kozijn

[Japanese trading post with Dutch roots. Back to the Past of Hirado's Future](#) (in Dutch)
by J.P. Corten

Mindful Circulations: Musing on Shared Histories



Naresh Kumar, Kerstin Winking and Naro Snackey (from left to right) during the exhibition set-up

Photo: Kerstin Winking

In 2018, *Mindful Circulations* was selected as one of the projects to be supported by DutchCulture's Shared Cultural Heritage Matching Fund. This grant supported projects and activities that shed light on histories and heritage that the Netherlands shares with several countries around the world, through a variety of cultural expressions, such as exhibitions, film and literature. *Mindful Circulations* consisted of an exhibition, a public programme and a [website](#), initiated by Indian curator Sumesh Sharma and Dutch curator and writer [Kerstin Winking](#). The exhibition took place in the summer of 2019 at the [Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum](#) in India.

The goal of the exhibition and its programme of activities was to address the histories shared between the Netherlands, India and Indonesia in artistic and critical ways, and through multiple perspectives. To do so, artists, cultural professionals and the wider public were invited to engage with heritage that connects these countries. The exhibition featured works by artists from the three countries, namely Zico Albaiquni, Timoteus Anggawan Kusno, Naresh Kumar, Jithinlal NR, Pallavi Paul, Rashmimala, Willem de Rooij, Naro Snackey,

Ignasius Dicky Takndare, Lidwien van de Ven, Vincent Vulsma and Oty Widasari.

Work in progress: a challenging process

Preparations started in 2018 in the Netherlands, and continued into 2019 in Indonesia and India. These included selecting the artists and the artworks, and making the necessary arrangements with them and the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum. This involved arranging loan agreements, insurance and transportation with the artists, while the communication and marketing work was done together with the museum. Unfortunately, at the start of the project, the co-curator was forced to step down from the collaboration, due to unforeseen circumstances. This meant that much of the coordination of the project fell into Kerstin's hands, although Puja Vaish, then a curator at the museum, stepped in from time to time. However, because of Sumesh Sharma's absence, all exhibition texts had to be written by Kerstin. Given the current political climate in India – which requires this institution to be cautious regarding its collaboration with international parties, because of the risk

they may represent in terms of ensuring that Hindu principles are safeguarded and spared critique – Kerstin was lucky to have Puja as a sparring partner.

Despite the challenges, the museum staff, the curator and the artists put a lot of effort into making this a successful exhibition. For instance, the museum increased the amount of the initially designated display space, and made technical equipment and additional display cases available. Furthermore, a team of craftsmen and conservators supported the exhibition set-up. On 1 June, the exhibition was officially opened by the museum director Tasneem Mehta, in the presence of the Dutch Consul-General Guido Thielman and the Indonesian Consul-General Ade Sukendar.

A visual and poetic engagement with colonial histories

While the cultural connections between India and Indonesia seem obvious in both countries' names and given their geographical location, the historical ties to the Netherlands become clearer when one recalls that the Dutch East India

Company (VOC) was active in India and Indonesia from the early 17th century. Over the course of time, the Dutch established a state system in the Indonesian archipelago called the Dutch East Indies. In 1945, Indonesian nationalists declared the independence of the Republic of Indonesia.

The exhibition *Mindful Circulations* aimed to trigger questions about hitherto hardly known histories, as well as the processes through which knowledge of the past is produced and disseminated in the present. The artworks retain their roots in specific colonial pasts, underlying global contemporary culture and motivating the viewers to reflect on the position of art within it. Taken together, the artworks embody poetic knowledge that is based on the artists' personal stories and anchored in artistic research about the circulation of images, myths and historical information and narratives.

The artwork *Memory in Practice – Breath of Fire*, by Dutch artist Naro Snackey, started from the idea that cultural objects seen in museums participate in the shaping of a person's identity. Her artistic practice is motivated by the exploration of her



Artist Rashmimala talks about her work during the opening

Photo: Kerstin Winking



Memory in Practice – Breath of Fire (2019) by Naro Snackey

Photo: Courtesy of the artist

experience of growing up in a multicultural setting: her parents are of German and Dutch-Indonesian descent, and the family lived in the Netherlands. For her artwork, Snackey combined different artistic media and created a multi-layered video animation that feels like traveling in another person's memory, since it is conveyed by a polyphony of ancestral voices and lands like a meditation on the storage of cultural memory.

The European colonial endeavour of measuring the world scientifically produced several cultural objects relating to the flora of Asia, such as Portuguese physicist Garcia da Orta's *Colóquios dos simples e drogas da Índia* book (1563), or the Dutch military and colonial administrator Hendrik van Rheedee's *Hortus Malabaricus* (1678–1693). Revisiting historical objects such as these, Indian artist Rashmimala produces drawings and sculptures inspired by historical books and their makers' devotion to plants. In the midst of today's expanding monocultures and the threat of extinction, the artist traces the histories of plants. Rashmimala's newest series of drawings and sculptures focuses on the mango and directs our gaze toward its appearance in colonial accounts.



A part of Rashmimala's artwork for *Mindful Circulations*

Photo: Courtesy of the artist

Another example is Ignasius Dicky Takndare's *The Hiyakhe Transfiguration*. Takndare grew up in the 1980s and 1990s in the Western part of New Guinea. He spent his childhood and youth in a town close to Jayapura, which was called Hollandia until 1962. In that year, the Dutch hesitantly transferred the sovereignty of West Papua to Indonesia. In a controversial referendum, it was decided that West Papua would not become independent, but would become a province of Indonesia. This artwork is part of the artist's efforts to raise awareness for the precarious situation of the indigenous people in Papua. All of the artworks, as well as photographs and the texts of the exhibition can be found on [the project's website](#), which can be seen as a long-term and online version of the exhibition.



The Hiyakhe Transfiguration (2019)
by Ignasius Dicky Takndare

Photo: Courtesy of the artist

Complicating the notion of shared heritage

The challenges experienced during the realisation of the exhibition project didn't just derive from the circumstances mentioned above, and from cultural differences between the Netherlands and India, where the exhibition took place. They related also to particular forms of inequality that stem from the unbalanced way in which political powers support artistic practices. For instance, while Dutch funding bodies like DutchCulture and the Mondriaan Fund provided the artists and the curator with financial support to realise their projects, support from India came mostly in kind, and no financial support was received from Indonesian institutions for the Indonesian artists.

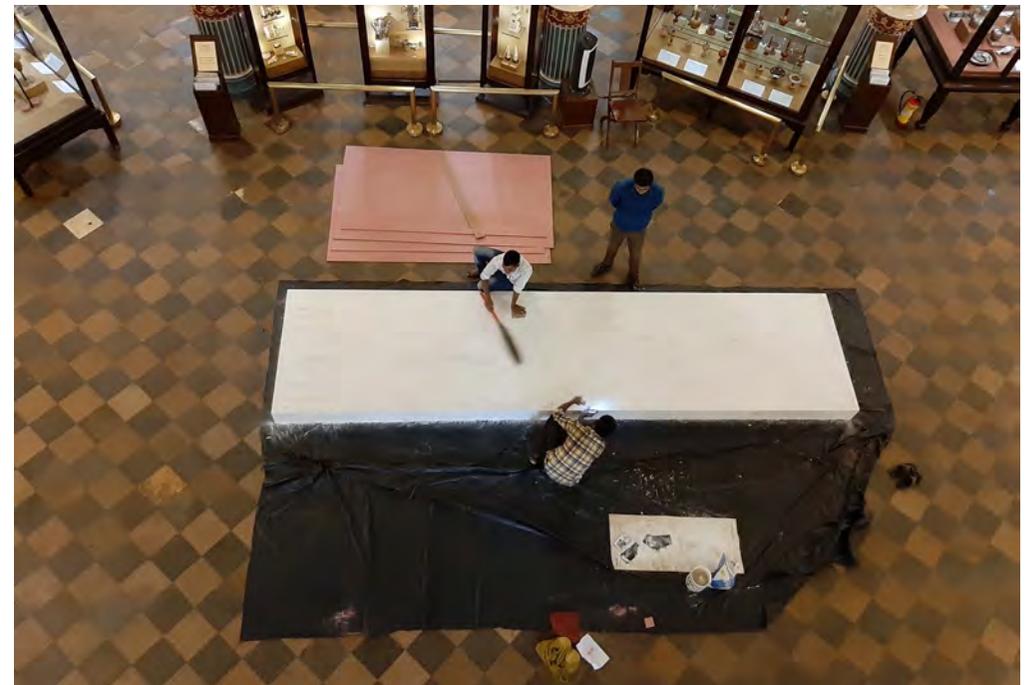
In this sense, this financial side of the project reveals some of the limitations of reciprocal international cooperation. Furthermore, while the histories engaged with by the artists may reflect historical connections between the Netherlands, Indonesia and India, the inequality, hierarchies and violence imposed on Southeast Asia by Dutch (and other) colonial governments complicate the term 'shared cultural heritage', which in some cases can come across as a euphemism. The histories connected to most of the Dutch heritage in India and Indonesia are rooted in colonialism and violence and even though the relations between both countries are in a healing process, the wounds are still sensitive.

A project such as *Mindful Circulations* reveals the shortcomings but also the potentials of working together on difficult shared pasts. In Kerstin Winking's view, the project showed that sharing Dutch funds,

honouring Indian hospitality, and involving Indonesian curiosity led to a successful exhibition, which the public enjoyed and that contributed to the career development and international representation of the participating artists. While the project required the curator and artists to be aware of the political context and adjust to the unbalanced financial structure, it also revealed the power of art for allowing different countries, with different cultures and languages, to communicate with each other and share perspectives about the histories that, for better or worse, bind them together.

Installing the exhibition at the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum, 29th of May 2019.

Photo: Kerstin Winking



This article was written by Sofia Lovegrove (DutchCulture), based on an interview with Kerstin Winking, freelance curator and PhD candidate at the Leiden University Institute for History.

Under a new name, and with adapted criteria, from 2021 and until 2024, Dutch Culture's Matching Fund will continue supporting projects that shed light on histories and heritage that connect the Netherlands and several countries around the world. For more information please check the website of [DutchCulture](https://dutchculture.nl).

Shared archival sources: Surinamese-Dutch collaborations

In 2017, the National Archives of the Netherlands (NAN) and the National Archives of Suriname (NAS) signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) for the period 2017–2020. In doing so, they renewed their long-standing cooperation to preserve and present archival collections concerning the shared history of both countries. During the past four years, the NAN and the NAS initiated several new projects focused on digitisation, online publication and capacity building.

Returning archives to Suriname

On 19 January 2017, the then Dutch Minister of Education, Culture and Science, Ms. Jet Bussemaker, and the National Archivist of the Netherlands, Mr. Marens Engelhard, handed over the final archive box to the Director of the NAS, Ms. Rita Tjien Fooh. This symbolic gesture marked the completion of the *Returning Archives to Suriname* project (in Dutch: *Teruggave Archieven Suriname*). The crowning achievement of this project was the restoration and digitisation of approximately 800 meters of colonial archives that belong to Suriname.

Suriname was part of the Kingdom of the Netherlands until 1975, and between 1916 and its independence, the Dutch government shipped the archives of Suriname to the Netherlands. The poor state of the records and the lack of adequate storage facilities in Suriname were seen as the main reasons for placing the 40 archives in the custody of the Netherlands. Nonetheless, the archives always remained the property of Suriname. In 2009, the Netherlands agreed to a request from the Government of Suriname to return the archives to where they were created and where they belong. Before this could happen, however, both parties had to meet certain conditions. Suriname built an appropriate repository, modernised their archival legislation, and trained archival staff. The Netherlands, on the other hand, wished to keep the archives for the benefit of the large Surinamese community in the Netherlands and for Dutch researchers. It was therefore agreed to digitise the archives. The approximately 5.5 million scans are now available online to everyone on the websites of the Dutch and Surinamese National Archives.



Staff of NAS and NAN at the conservation lab of the National Archives of Suriname, where archives are restored and prepared for digitization.

Photo:
National Archives of
the Netherlands

Making slave registers widely available

On 1 July 2018, the annual date that celebrates *Keti Koti* (commemorating those who lived in slavery and celebrating the abolition of slavery in 1863), a database composed of the slave registers of Suriname was launched on the websites of the NAN and the NAS. These registers contain information of approximately 80,000 enslaved people and their owners in Suriname between 1830 and 1863. Because the registry is now available online, descendants of enslaved people are able to explore their history and the lives of their ancestors. The final records of the digitised slave registers were added to the database in October 2019.

At the time these registers were created, Suriname was a Dutch colony. The Dutch had created a wealthy plantation economy based on slave labour, mainly from enslaved people from Africa, and, to a lesser extent, indigenous people. After the abolition of the international slave trade in 1808, the registration of Suriname's enslaved population was established. In an effort to monitor ownership and to ban illegal trading, slave owners were required to register each enslaved person.

The 43 slave registers that survived are kept at the NAS. They provide personal information on each enslaved person, such as their (first) names, their mother's name, date of birth, death or manumission (liberation), possible disabilities or diseases (such as leprosy) and information about purchase and sales. The emancipation registers, kept at the NAN, are also available online and list the enslaved people who were granted freedom on 1 July 1863, the official yet not effective date that marks the abolition of slavery in the Dutch former colonies. The emancipation registers are complementary to the slave registers because (unlike the latter) they list the surnames that people were given in 1863.

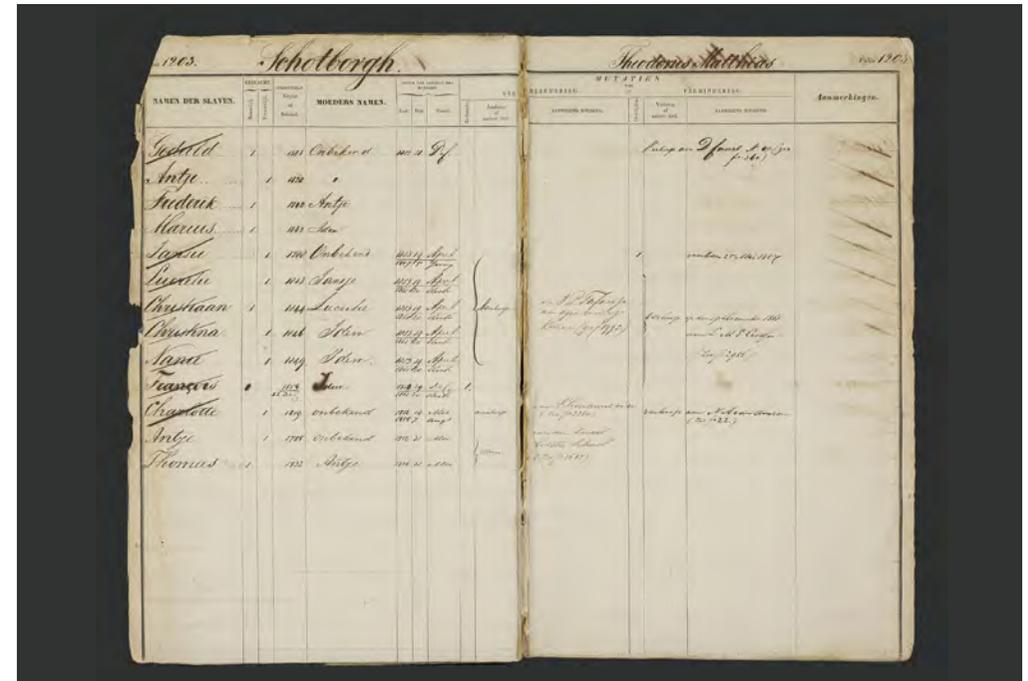
In January 2017 the crowdfunding project *Make the Surinamese slave registers public* (in Dutch: *Maak de Surinaamse slavenregisters openbaar*), was started by Coen van Galen (Radboud University in the Netherlands) and Maurits Hassankhan (Anton de Kom University of Suriname) to digitise and index all the records. With the help of 1500 volunteers they created a database.

The importance of the slave registers can be found in the fact that they consist of a registration of all individuals who lived in slavery in Suriname in the decades before abolition. This individual information makes it possible to track people from owner to owner through time. The information can also be combined with data from other sources, such as newspapers, letters and court reports. These sources thus provide a new perspective on slavery research in the context of Suriname. By making archives about the shared history of Suriname and the Netherlands available online, the NAN and the NAS hope to facilitate academic research, for example on the long-term impact of slavery and colonialism, a topic that is increasingly gaining attention in public debates, in these and other countries.

The media in both Suriname and the Netherlands paid extensive attention to the launch of these online databases. Furthermore, the database is the most visited dataset of the NAN yet and has been consulted more than 600 thousand times since its launch.

Slave registers, inventory number 27, collection National Archives of Suriname.

Source:
National Archives of
Suriname



Digitisation and capacity building

Over the past four years, several training courses on the conservation and restoration of archives were organised in Suriname by conservation specialists from the NAN in cooperation with the National Archives of Curacao. In addition, several workshops were given in the field of records management, covering topics such as appraisal and selection of archives and creating archival inventories. The NAN is also funding the Masters programme Archives & Records Management of two senior staff members from the NAS at the University of the West Indies. In 2018, a high-quality scanner was installed at the NAS and staff members (scan operators) were trained in using the new equipment.

In November 2019, two archivists from the NAS participated in the NAN's International Winter School 'Managing Archives. Challenges and chances for the 21st century archivist', in the Hague. With these capacity building projects, the NAN aims to share its expertise in a sustainable way and to strengthen the NAS's ability to carry out its mission.

Future projects

In the coming years, more Surinamese archives will be inventoried, restored and digitised by staff members of the NAS. Among the archives that will become available online are the civic records (1828–1950) and the migration registers of indentured labourers from China, India, Java and the former West-Indies (1853–1930). The registers can be combined, rendering it possible to follow the lives of persons after they became free, and to study their experiences and interactions with other groups within Surinamese society. An interdisciplinary team connected to the Radboud University, the Anton de Kom University of Suriname and the International Institute for Social History in Amsterdam aims to create a longitudinal database of the Surinamese population, ranging from around 1830 to 1950. This so-called 'Historical Database of Suriname' will comprise a sample of the Surinamese population during this period.

*This article was written by Lidwien Jansen
(National Archives of the Netherlands).*



Participants of the international Winter School 'Managing Archives: Challenges and chances for the 21st century archivist' at the National Archives of the Netherlands in the Hague, November 2019.

Photo:
National Archives of
the Netherlands

Further information

Website NAN:
<https://www.nationaalarchief.nl/>

Website NAS:
<https://www.nationaalarchief.sr/>

Russian-Dutch Shared Heritage: From artistic practices to knowledge exchange

This article sheds light on two very different projects supported by the Dutch Embassy in Moscow and the Netherlands Consulate-General in St. Petersburg. While the first one focuses on a creative engagement with the shared histories of Russia and the Netherlands, the second sheds light on the potential of historical structures towards the revitalisation of cities.

An artistic take on the past: weaving shared heritage

St. Petersburg was founded on 27 May 1703 by Peter the Great in order to create a new window on Europe. Through the close contacts between Peter the Great and the Netherlands, the city

got a Western appearance and had a canal system according to the Amsterdam model. From the 18th century until the October Revolution, Dutch professionals and merchants founded a vivid Dutch community with the Dutch Reformed Church located in the centre of the city as its beating heart.

The strong ties between the Netherlands and Peter the Great, his visits to the Netherlands, the rich history of St. Petersburg, the Russians and the development of the city up to the important turning point in the Russian Revolution are interesting histories that lend themselves well to the development of a new contemporary visual story depicted in the woven goblin by

Koen Taselaar's *The Cat, the Herring, and More Tall Tales from the Neva*.

Photo: Tommy de Lange



Dutch artist Koen Taselaar, produced by TextielMuseum/TextielLab in Tilburg (the Netherlands). Taselaar's tapestry titled *The Cat, the Herring, and More Tall Tales from the Neva* was the result of a collection assignment from the Foundation Hermitage XXI (St. Petersburg) to the artist and the TextielMuseum, executed with support of the Netherlands Consulate-General in St. Petersburg.

Koen Taselaar worked on his tapestry for almost a year. During the research visit to Russia, together with the TextielMuseum/TextielLab's director Errol van de Werdt, they gave master classes for the students of the Saint Petersburg Stieglitz State Academy of Art and Design. The result of Taselaar's work is a tapestry with multiple elements: Russian emperors, the Hermitage cats (one of them is Peter the Great), mice, fish, the Kunstkamera museum and the New Holland island, the Winter Palace, Catherine II, and many others. The gobelin, one of the most traditional products of Dutch applied art, was transported from Tilburg to St. Petersburg with great difficulty, given that this took place during the second wave of the COVID-19 pandemic. The artwork was handed over to the Restoration and Storage Centre of the State Hermitage museum for its permanent exhibition.

For all the partners involved it will become one of the most memorable projects, not only in the challenging year 2020. It was chosen by the Dutch Council for Culture (Raad voor Cultuur) as one of the three best practices for the livecast presentation *Naar een wendbare en weerbare culturele en creative sector* (Towards an agile and resilient cultural and creative sector, with Minister van Engelshoven of the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science on 16 November 2020. In St. Petersburg, the artwork will become a base for an additional learning project for youth within [Museum 15/24](#), an extensive Netherlands-Russian museum cooperation funded by the [Creative Twinning](#) programme.



Koen Taselaar's *The Cat, the Herring, and More Tall Tales from the Neva*.

Photo: Tommy de Lange

Cultural heritage cooperation in Rostov Veliky

In early 17th century, Russia went through a period of wars and unrest, in which foreign troops (Polish and Lithuanian) mingled in the Russian battle for succession. Attacks destroyed many cities, as the traditional wooden palisade reinforcement proved weak against firearms. In 1613, czar Mikhail, the grandfather of later czar Peter the Great, came to the throne, established peace, and ordered the reinforcement of cities.

At that time, the Dutch were amongst the leaders in fortification building. For that reason, in 1632–34 Dutch engineer Jan Cornelius van Rodenburg came to one of these cities, Rostov Veliky, to build a modern system of defence. This city can be compared to many Dutch cities and towns when it comes to its location – in a flat region, between a lake and a marsh – and thus Van Rodenburg built an earthen fortress of the Dutch type. The fortification is seen as an early example of mutually beneficial technical cooperation, long before Peter the Great. In general, heritage of Dutch origin in Russia is not contested; rather, Russians are often grateful for the 17th and 18th century knowledge transfer.

Thanks to the stability and lack of wars in that part in Russia over the centuries, the fortress of Rostov never saw action and was therefore preserved in relatively good state. Over the centuries, however, the ramparts of the fortress crumbled. In the minds of the inhabitants too has the story of how and why it was built been deteriorating. That is, until 2013.

In that year, the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands (RCE) started to work with the city authorities, museum professionals and civil society of Rostov to make plans for the conservation and future use of the fortress to the benefit of the local population. Joint activities started with a thorough analysis of the fortress by Dutch experts, both through visual inspection and historical research. From then on, the RCE and the Embassy in Moscow supported Rostov in a range of research projects, including with Russian students of architecture and city planning. This collaboration included also two visits to the Netherlands by delegations from Rostov, to see examples of how several Dutch historic cities use their fortress to attract tourists, but also for the benefit of the local population.



The Rostov fortification in winter.

Photo: Gecko Visual

Seven years of joint activities in Rostov are slowly but structurally yielding results: students at an architecture school have taken the fortress as the starting point for their master's thesis, walking tours have been developed, and information signs now stand at spots along the ramparts with the best views. In early 2020, a [book was published](#) that highlights personal memories of ordinary citizens of Rostov. Through these and other activities, the fortress is once again becoming a part of local life. The Rostov NGO *League of Heritage Keepers* was founded to develop further plans together with the local population. In summer 2020, a plein air painting event was held, and this NGO plans to make this event a yearly tradition. When the Rostov Kremlin museum in 2021 will open its new permanent exposition of the city's history, the fortress will feature prominently.

A more recent stage in the development of the project is the Russian government's loan from the New Development Bank of the BRICS, the association of upcoming economies, Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa. This loan will be used for the re-development of several historical towns in Russia, including Rostov. A design institute in St. Petersburg has won the tender for three interventions in Rostov, one of them being the development of a tourist walking route along the ramparts of the Dutch earthen fortress. The designers from St. Petersburg appreciate receiving Dutch comments and are therefore going to share their first sketch with the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands.



One of the artist's work during the plein air painting event in Rostov in July 2020.

Photo: Julia Proshutinskaya

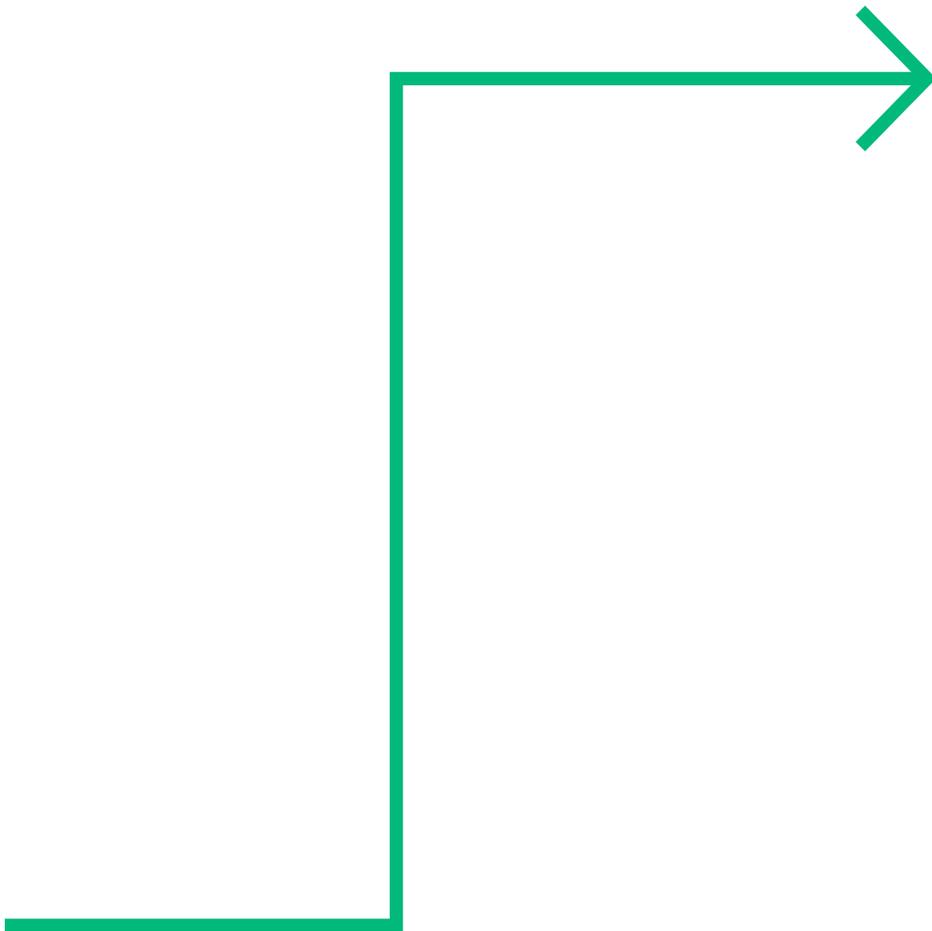
This article was written by Victoria Lourik and Janette Verrijzer (respectively Netherlands Consulate-General in St. Petersburg and Dutch Embassy in Moscow). It was reviewed by Pavel Kouzmine (Dutch Embassy in Moscow).

Further information

About Koen Taselaar:
[Hermitage Textile Museum](#)
[DutchCulture](#)

About the [Dutch fortification in Rostov: Publication in Russian and English](#) about the fortification and the 2020 plein air painting event

Looking forward



Cultural Heritage in the International Cultural Policy of the Netherlands 2021–2024

Interest in cultural heritage is increasing both at home and abroad. The protection of tangible and intangible heritage is closely linked to debates on changes in our human environment (such as urbanisation), as well as sustainability and identity. Heritage contributes to mutual understanding, especially when related to shared histories. Partnerships with other countries, especially those with which the Netherlands shares a past, colonial or otherwise, will therefore continue to be important for the [International Cultural Policy](#) of the Netherlands in the next four years.

A link with topical themes and priorities in the focus countries is desirable in order to work together on the basis of dialogue. The emphasis is on sustainable preservation, conservation and accessibility of heritage sites and archives, with scope for different perspectives. Cultural heritage can also play an important role in other ways, and can foster the broader ambitions of international cultural policy. These include, notably, capacity development and knowledge exchange in cases involving adaptive reuse, digitalisation or the management of collections, colonial and otherwise. One of the goals mentioned in this policy paper is increasing Dutch people's knowledge of their shared history. The programme to promote historic and democratic awareness gives substance to the pursuit of this aim. Knowledge and insights gained through international heritage partnerships are valuable for this programme.



Handover of the Letter of Intent by Tom Jose (Chief Secretary, Government of Kerala) to Maren Engelhard (Director General National Archives of the Netherlands) in 2019. This marked the formal start of the cooperation of the two institutes on the [further preservation and digitisation](#) of Dutch records in Kerala.

Photo: Embassy of India, the Hague

From Shared Heritage to Shared Endeavours

The Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, DutchCulture, the National Archives of the Netherlands and the Dutch embassies will continue their programmes in the new policy period. The work of these organisations within this policy-framework is based on the idea that international heritage cooperation contributes to solutions for societal challenges in the Netherlands and abroad, and is in line with the Dutch government's aim to increase knowledge about our shared pasts and values. Hence during the policy period 2021-2024, we will continue to work together under the name **International Heritage Cooperation. From Shared Heritage to Shared Endeavours**. The new name fits in well with the wish to engage more critically with the language we use, and to better convey values such as reciprocity and respect for different perspectives.

Within the framework of the new international cultural policy, there is scope to expand international heritage cooperation to 23 focus countries and to develop tailor-made programmes in collaboration with partners and embassies. These

countries are: Australia*, Belgium, Brazil*, China, France, Germany, Egypt, Hungary, India*, Indonesia*, Italy, Japan*, Morocco, Poland, Russia*, South Africa*, South Korea, Spain, Sri Lanka*, Suriname*, Turkey, United Kingdom and United States*. This includes the 10 countries (see *) with which the partners worked together on shared cultural heritage.

During the next four years, the **Cultural Heritage Agency** of the Netherlands will carry out this mission starting from the vision that only when professionals form international networks and work together, it is possible to utilise the full potential of heritage for society. To this end, the Agency seeks international partnerships in relation to societal challenges. By supporting professionals from across the world to learn from each other, jointly develop knowledge and expertise and share their results, the Agency strives to strengthen the heritage field in the Netherlands and the partner countries. In recent years, the Agency has built strong partnerships in the former 10 focus countries. It will continue to work with these countries, while seeking partnerships with the other countries prioritised in the

International Cultural Policy, depending on the challenge in question and available capacity.

In the new policy period, applications to **DutchCulture's** Matching Fund are open to 23 focus countries and the travel compensation fund has been expanded to include more countries. From 2021 onwards, DutchCulture will also be supporting the mobility of professionals in the focus countries in their efforts to set up projects with Dutch partners, as well as partners in other focus countries. In doing this, DutchCulture hopes to offer more opportunities outside the Netherlands and enable multilateral exchange and cooperation. DutchCulture will also focus more intensely on exchange and cooperation within Europe, through its Europe+Heritage programme. Financial support is also available for travels and projects that focus on shared challenges and current topics amongst European countries.

The **National Archives of the Netherlands** and the **Dutch embassies** in the partner countries will continue to play their specific role within the International Heritage Cooperation policy. The National Archives will be placing a stronger emphasis on multiperspectivity, by actively engaging (marginalised) communities in improving the accessibility of archival collections. Regarding the Dutch embassies, alongside the 10 previous Dutch embassies in the 10 focus countries, more embassies will be focusing on International Heritage Cooperation.

Furthermore, from 2021 onwards, the **Dutch Centre for Intangible Cultural Heritage (KIEN)**, will be joining the other partners to strengthen international heritage cooperation in the field of intangible cultural heritage. Intangible heritage involves social customs, traditions, rituals, representations, expressions, particular knowledge of nature and craft skills that communities and groups recognise as a form of cultural heritage. The Centre aims to promote intangible cultural heritage and to make it accessible, to stimulate and professionalise the sector and encourage people to participate in it.

We look forward to continue facilitating knowledge exchange and cooperation between the Netherlands and other countries. During the next four years, we hope to foster further exchange of knowledge – both amongst ourselves and others in the

Netherlands and around the world – to strengthen existing connections, and to stimulate the creation of new ones. May the next four years be filled with inspiring connections and co-creations, and fruitful exchanges of knowledge and experiences, online and offline.



Participants of the 2019 [Sharing Stories on Contested Histories](#) training at the Reinwardt Academy, Amsterdam. This training programme was initiated by the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands and is organised together with the Reinwardt Academy. It was motivated and conceptualised from the realisation that presenting and narrating contested pasts represents a challenge shared by heritage professionals in many countries and that we can all learn from each other.

Photo: Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands

Colophon

Shared Cultural Heritage 2017–2020: Looking back to look forward is a publication produced by DutchCulture in collaboration with the Cultural Heritage Agency of the Netherlands, the National Archives of the Netherlands, the Dutch embassies in the partner countries, the Ministry of Education, Culture and Science, and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

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